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JERUSALEM IN BIBLE TIMES

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VI. JERUSALEM IN THE EARLIEST TIMES

Concerning the origin of the city of Jerusalem we have no information. Even the meaning of the name is unknown. Various Semitic etymologies have been proposed, but all are uncertain, and it is possible that the name goes back to the primitive non-Semitic inhabitants of Palestine. Ezek. 16:3 says of Jerusalem: "Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of the Canaanite; thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother a Hittite." This statement may point to a tradition that the city was originally founded by Amorite colonists, settling in Hittite territory.

In Gen. 14:18 we read that Melchizedek, King of Salem, blessed Abram, and Abram gave him tithes of the spoil taken from the kings of the East. Tradition identifies Salem with Jerusalem. This idea first appears in Ps. 76:2, and is followed by Josephus (*Ant.* i, 10:2; vii, 3:2), and by other Jewish writers. In favor of this identification are the facts that Melchizedek bears a name of similar formation with Adoni-zedek, king of Jerusalem in the time of Joshua, and that he holds a conspicuous position among the city-kings of Canaan analogous to that of the king of Jerusalem in the Tell el-Amarna letters. The fact that Abram pays tithes to him and recognizes him as a priest of the Most High God seems also to indicate a desire on the part of the writer of Gen., chap. 14, to connect the sanctity of Jerusalem with the ancient priesthood of Melchizedek. This story, however, is of very uncertain origin. By most recent critics it is regarded as a *midrash* that was not inserted in the Book of Genesis until after the exile. Upon what basis of historical tradition it rests is unknown. This story, accordingly, can scarcely be utilized to throw light upon the early history of Jerusalem.

The first emergence of the city into the light of history is in the Tell el-Amarna letters. These are dispatches sent to the



MOUNT SINAI

kings of Egypt by petty kings of the land of Canaan. They date from about 1400 B. C., and are written on clay tablets in the Babylonian language and cuneiform script. Seven of these letters were sent by Abdi-khiba, king of Jerusalem.¹ From these letters it appears that the king of Jerusalem was one of the more important of the city-kings, and that he had a number of towns tributary to him. His city was probably walled, because in one of the letters² he says: "We will open Jerusalem to the guards whom thou shalt send by the hand of Khaya." In all these letters he begs for the help of the king of Egypt against a people known as the Khabiri. The name is etymologically identical with "Hebrews," and these were apparently Bedawin clans of the same stock to which the later Israelites belonged. We are probably to think of the Jerusalem of Abdi-khiba as presenting a similar appearance to Gezer of the same period as it has been excavated by Mr. Macalister. The houses were one-story structures of rough stone, plastered with mud and covered with thatched roofs, containing only two or three rooms. The city wall was a rampart of earth faced on the inside and outside with rough stones gathered off of the fields. From the Tell el-Amarna letters we learn that there was considerable wealth accumulated in the cities of Canaan at the time of the Egyptian supremacy; that an active commerce was carried on; and that the country was as prosperous as at any later period of its history.

After the time of Abdi-khiba Jerusalem disappears from our view until the Hebrew conquest, about 1200 B. C. According to Josh. 10:1, Adoni-zedek, its king, united the kings of Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon in a confederacy against the Israelites. He was defeated by Joshua, but the city of Jerusalem was not captured. According to Josh. 15:63, "As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out: but the Jebusites dwelt with the children of Judah at Jerusalem, unto this day." In Judg. 1:1-7 we have a duplicate account of the war against Adoni-zedek. Here the name appears as Adoni-bezek, but this is evidently a textual corruption induced by the name Bezek in vs. 5. In vs. 7 we are told that they (that is, his own people) brought

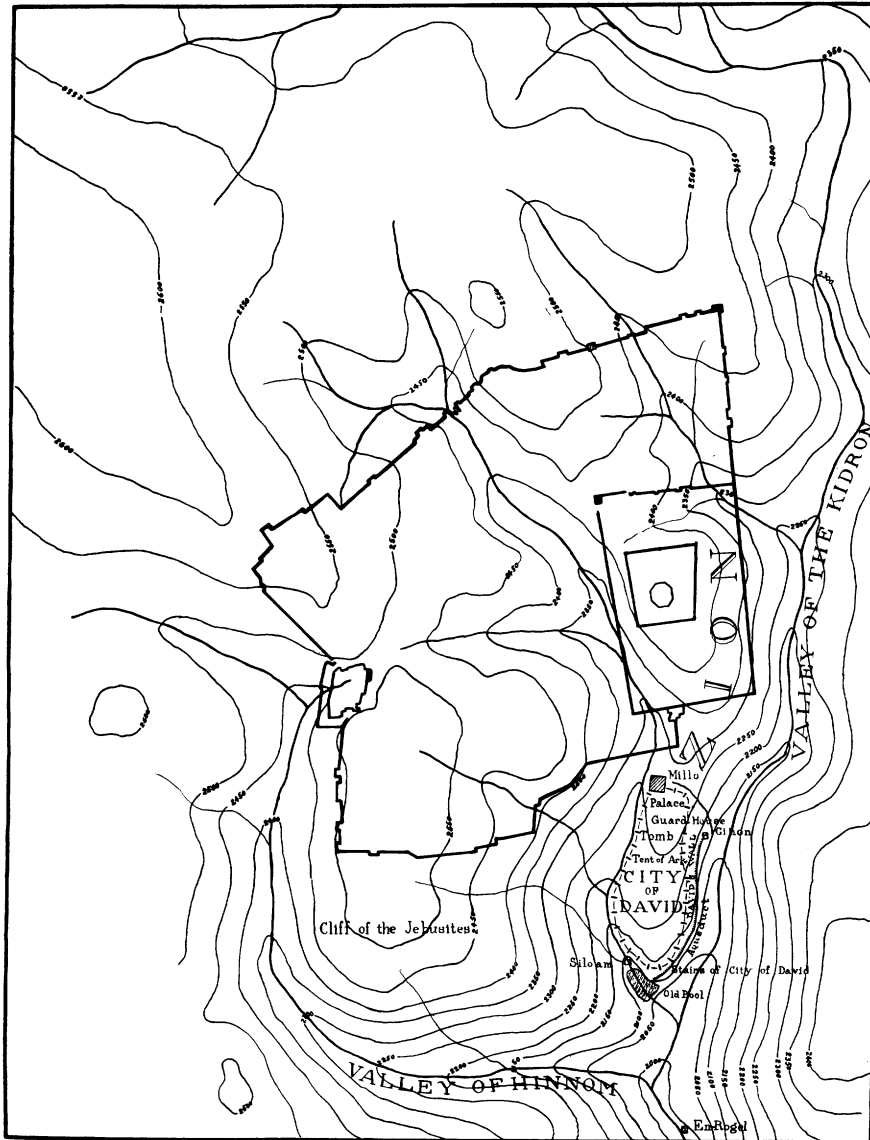
¹ Winckler, *Thontafeln von Tell-el-Amarna*, Nos. 179-85.

² *Ibid.*, No. 185.

him to Jerusalem. This shows that he was the king of Jerusalem, and makes it evident that he was the same person as Adoni-zedek of the narrative in Josh., chap. 15. Judg. 1:21 also records that, although Israel defeated the king of Jerusalem, it was not able to take his capital: "And the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem: but the Jebusites dwelt with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem unto this day." The truth of these statements is attested by the narrative of Judg. 19:12, where the Levite is unwilling to turn aside into Jerusalem because it is a city of aliens. In startling contrast with these statements, Judg. 1:8 records: "The children of Judah fought against Jerusalem and took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword and set the city on fire." This statement comes from the hand of one of the late editors of the Book of Judges, and is clearly unhistorical. Jerusalem remained in the hands of the Canaanites until it was taken from them by David.

In regard to the location and size of Canaanitish Jerusalem we have little information. In II Sam. 5:6 f. we are told that David took the stronghold of the Jebusites and renamed it after himself; consequently, the acropolis of ancient Jerusalem must have occupied the site of the later City of David. This, as we have seen, lay on the southern end of the eastern hill. This is the only natural location for the Jebusite fortress, since it is close to Gihon, the only spring that is near the city.

Whether the city was limited to the eastern hill or also spread to the western hill is uncertain. It seems to have been a place of considerable importance. Its king in the time of the Amarna letters had a number of smaller places tributary to him. Adoni-zedek in the time of Joshua was the head of a coalition. In Judg. 1:7 he boasts that he had cut off the thumbs and great toes of seventy kings, and had compelled them to gather their food under his table. If the story of Melchizedek in Gen., chap. 14, has a historical kernel, it also indicates the importance of the place. It seems hardly likely that a city of such prominence, which the Israelites were unable to capture during the entire period of the Judges, should have been limited to the small area of the southern end of the eastern hill. We are almost forced to believe that it extended to the western hill



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even before its capture by David. In Judg., chap. 19, the Levite in going from Bethlehem to Gibeah passes by the city of the Jebusites. The natural road from Bethlehem to Gibeah leads past the western hill, and the mention of a Jebusite city in this connection seems, accordingly, to show that the western hill was occupied. The Priestly Code, Josh. 15:8, speaks of the Cliff of the Jebusites as lying north of the Valley of Hinnom. The only cliff that lies north of Hinnom is the western hill, and the name "Cliff of the Jebusites" may be a survival of an ancient designation. Josephus (*Ant.*, vii, 3:2; *Wars*, v, 4:1) recognizes both the Upper and the Lower City as existing as early as the time of the Judges.

In II Sam. 5:6f. = I Chron. 11:4f. we read:

And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land: which spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither: thinking, David cannot come in hither. Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion; the same is the City of David. And David dwelt in the strong hold, and called it the City of David.

David chose Jerusalem as his capital, partly because of the strength of its position, and partly because it was located on the border between Judah and Benjamin, and therefore was neutral ground. By making it his residence he did not give offense to either tribe, as he must have done if he had selected a site within the territory of the other. A number of building operations are ascribed to David after his capture of the city.

1. *Millo*.—In II Sam. 5:9 mention is made of the Millo as the starting-point of the wall that inclosed the City of David. The statement that he built "round about from Millo" suggests that Millo was already in existence, as a part of the earlier Canaanitish fortification. The name is derived from a root which means "to fill," and means a "filling" or "embankment." It is not in common use in Hebrew, but appears in Assyrian in the forms *mulû* or *tamlû*, which mean an embankment on which a palace or temple stands. When one considers the extent of Babylonian influence in Canaan during the third millennium B.C., it seems likely that Millo was a Canaanitish name formed under Babylonian influence. This view is favored by the fact that Beth-Millo occurs as a proper name in the Canaanitish city of Shechem in Judg. 9:6. We meet the Millo

again in I Kings 9:15, "This is the reason of the levy which king Solomon raised; for to build the house of the Lord, and his own house, and Millo, and the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, and Megiddo, and Gezer;" I Kings 9:24, "Pharaoh's daughter came up out of the City of David unto her house which Solomon had built for her: then did he build Millo;" I Kings 11:27, "Solomon built Millo, and closed up the gap of the City of David his father;" II Chron. 32:5,



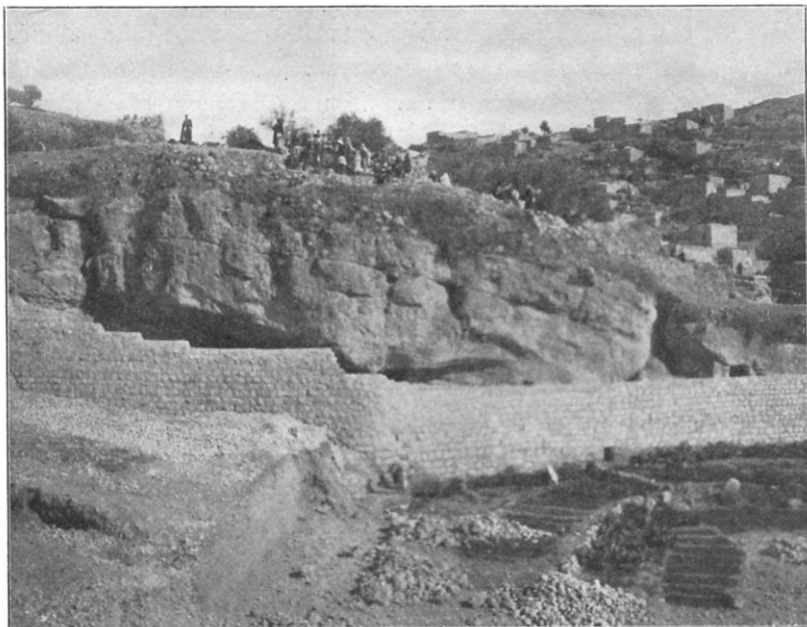
Photograph by L. R. Paton

NORTH END OF THE CITY OF DAVID

"And he took courage, and built up all the wall that was broken down, and raised it up to the towers, and the other wall without, and strengthened Millo in the City of David." In all these passages the LXX translates Millo by Acra, which, as we have seen, was the name of the Syrian stronghold on the east hill between the Temple and the City of David.

From these passages we gather that the Millo was a fortress of some sort that could be successively enlarged by David, Solomon, and Hezekiah; that it lay in the City of David—that is, somewhere

on the southern end of the eastern hill; and that it was part of the inclosing wall of the City of David, and was designed to defend that city at its weakest point. The only weak point in the fortification of the southeast hill is the narrow neck which connects it with the Temple hill on the north. When we remember that Millo is identified by the LXX with the Acra which overlooked the Temple, it seems probable that we should regard it as a rampart which protected



Photograph by L. B. Paton

SITE OF THE CITY OF DAVID

the northern side of the City of David. Probably it was a wall of earth faced with stones, such as the excavations have disclosed in the city of Gezer of the same period. Such a rampart, constructed by filling in earth between two walls of stone, could be appropriately described as a Millo, or "filling." It could also easily be enlarged by later monarchs. The wall at Gezer has been strengthened by having a new face built and a new filling inserted between it and the old wall. In some such way David, Solomon, and Hezekiah may have built out the old Millo of the Canaanites.

2. *David's Wall*.—In the same passage which mentions the Millo (II Sam. 5:9) it is stated that "David built round about from Millo." This can only refer to a wall which inclosed the City of David. This wall began at the Millo—that is, the embankment—across the neck of land toward the north, and followed the eastern side of the southeast hill at some distance above the bed of the Kidron. At the southern end of the hill it stood on the top of the rocky cliff that rises above Siloam, and then followed the western side of the hill above the bed of the Tyropoeon Valley until it returned to the Millo. Traces of this wall and of the rock scarps that formed its foundation were discovered by Bliss on the southern and eastern sides of the southeast hill. No traces of a wall in the Tyropoeon Valley have yet been discovered.

3. *David's Palace*.—In II Sam. 5:9, 11, it is recorded that "David built him a house in the City of David" (in II Sam. 5:9, instead of the unintelligible words "and inward" of the Hebrew text, the LXX reads, "and his house"). Neh. 12:37 speaks of the procession of the Levites as coming up the steps of the City of David, and then passing the House of David on their way to the Water Gate which opened on the east side of the city above the spring Gihon. This indicates that the Palace stood on high ground at the north end of the City of David (cf. II Sam. 11:2). According to II Sam. 5:11 the Palace was built for David by Tyrian workmen sent him by Hiram, king of Tyre. The walls were built of stone, and it was roofed with cedar beams brought from the Lebanon (cf. II Sam. 7:2). The necessity of bringing Tyrian workmen shows that the native architecture of Israel was not advanced, and the mention of cedar wood as a curiosity indicates that the use of large beams in architecture was previously unknown. The royal palace is mentioned also in II Sam. 11:8, 9, 27; 15:16; 19:11, 30; 20:3.

4. *The Guard House*.—In Neh. 3:16 mention is made of the "House of the Heroes." This seems to have been a dwelling for the bodyguard, a list of whose names is given in II Sam. 23:8-39. In regard to the location of this building all that is known is that it stood in the City of David on the eastern hill.

5. *The Tent of the Ark*.—In II Sam. 6:10, 12, 17=II Chron. 1:4 f. we are told that David prepared a sanctuary for the Ark in the City

of David. This is mentioned again in I Kings 2:28 and 8:4. This sanctuary was merely a tent, designed for the temporary accommodation of the Ark, and, consequently, no trace of its location survived in later times.

6. *The Tomb of David.*—II Kings 2:10 tells us that "David slept with his fathers and was buried in the City of David." This Sepulcher of the Kings is mentioned again in the case of Solomon (I Kings 11:43=II Chron. 9:31); Rehoboam (I Kings 14:31=II Chron. 12:16); Abijah (I Kings 15:8=II Chron. 14:1); Asa (I Kings 15:24=II Chron. 16:14); Jehoshaphat (I Kings 22:50=II Chron. 21:1); Jehoram (II Kings 8:24=II Chron. 21:20); Ahaziah (II Kings 9:28=II Chron. 22:9); Joash (II Kings 12:21=II Chron. 24:25); Amaziah (II Kings 14:20=II Chron. 25:28); Uzziah (II Kings 15:7=II Chron. 26:23); Jotham (II Kings 15:38=II Chron. 27:9); Ahaz (II Kings 16:20=II Chron. 28:27); Hezekiah (II Chron. 32:33). Chronicles differs from Kings in reporting Asa as buried "in his own sepulcher" instead of "with his fathers," and Jehoram and Joash as buried "in the City of David, but not in the Tombs of the Kings." According to the Chronicler, apparently, Ahaziah was buried at Samaria. The Book of Kings represents all the kings from David to Ahaz as having been buried with their fathers in the City of David.

Ezek. 43:7 speaks of the tombs of the kings as adjoining the wall of the Temple. Neh. 3:16 mentions "the sepulchers of David" after the Pool of Siloam and the stairs of the City of David, and before Ophel and the Water Gate. From these passages it is clear that the tombs of the kings lay on the southeastern hill near the Temple and royal residence. Clermont-Ganneau has suggested that the curious bend in the Siloam tunnel was designed to avoid these sepulchers, but Ezekiel's statement in regard to the nearness of the tombs to the Temple indicates a more northerly location. The course of the Siloam tunnel was probably due to a desire to keep near the surface of the ground, so that the workmen could inform themselves by shafts as to their whereabouts. Josephus states that the Sepulcher of David was opened and plundered by Hyrcanus (*Ant.*, xiii, 8:4; *Wars*, i, 2:5), and that Herod also opened the tomb and gained additional plunder (*Ant.*, xvi, 7:1). The Tomb of David is also

mentioned in Acts 2:29; but from none of these passages do we gain any light as to its precise location.

7. *David's Aqueducts*.—The only other constructions that can be traced back as far as the time of David are two channels for water that lead from the spring of Gihon. The first of these is a canal on the surface of the ground outside of the city wall, above the Valley of Kidron, that originally conducted the water of the spring to the Lower Pool of Siloam at the mouth of the Tyropoeon Valley. This channel must be older than the tunnel which Hezekiah constructed to bring water into the city, inasmuch as the tunnel was a substitute for it. Isa. 22:9 speaks of the Old Pool as in existence before Hezekiah's time, and by this doubtless means the Lower Pool of Siloam to which this aqueduct led.

Another channel cut in the rock leads to a well and subterranean passage opening inside of the city wall. This must be later than the channel outside of the city, since it was evidently designed as a substitute for it in time of siege. It must be older than Hezekiah's tunnel, since this is a more elaborate carrying-out of the same idea. Both the surface channel and the short tunnel are probably as old as the time of David, and may go back to the period of Canaanitish occupation. It has even been suggested that the "gutter" or "water-course" (II Sam. 5:8), through which Joab made his entrance into the stronghold was the passage leading to the short tunnel.

In regard to the extent of Jerusalem in the time of David we are in the same doubt that we are in regard to the extent of the Canaanitish city. The City of David, or Zion, certainly lay upon the eastern hill; but whether Jerusalem extended beyond this hill is uncertain. If the city of the Canaanites reached over to the western hill, then the Jerusalem of David was probably equally extensive. Even if the city of the Canaanites was limited to the eastern hill, it is possible that in the time of David Jerusalem began to expand. From II Sam. 5:6 f.; 24:18 f., it appears that David spared the lives of the Jebusites when he captured their stronghold, and that they remained settled in Jerusalem. Since he made the stronghold his residence and garrisoned it with Israelitish troops, it is not likely that the Jebusites were permitted to remain on the eastern hill. Probably, therefore, they were compelled to settle on the western hill. To this cir-

cumstance may be due the name "Cliff of the Jebusites" which, according to Josh. 15:8 and 18:6, lay north of the Valley of Hinnom. The threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite, according to II Sam. 24:16, was the place where David saw the angel stand with his hand stretched forth toward Jerusalem to destroy it. The description suggests that the apparition appeared on the western hill over against the eastern hill where David's palace was located. Only in Chronicles is it stated that the threshing-floor of Araunah was the place on which the Temple was subsequently built, and this conception is evidently due to a desire to legitimize the site of the Temple.

II Sam. 14:28 states that Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem and saw not the king's face. If the Jerusalem of David was limited to the small area of the southeast hill, it is difficult to see how Absalom could reside there without coming into contact with his father. If, however, the city extended to the western hill, he might be banished from the palace quarter and still reside in the capital. I Chron. 11:8 adds to the statement of II Sam. 5:9, that "David built round about from Millo," the words: "and Joab caused the rest of the city to live." This indicates belief on the part of the Chronicler that Jerusalem in the time of David was more extensive than the City of David. Josephus (*Wars*, v, 4:1) states that the Upper City was taken by David as well as the Lower City, and that it was called by him the *Phrourion*, or "fortress." On the whole, the evidence seems favorable to the idea that settlements on the western hill were in existence as early as the time of David, but there is no evidence that the western hill was inclosed with a wall at this early date. The fact that no buildings on the western hill are mentioned indicates that this region was still unprotected.